

HERBERT C. HOLDRIDGE
BRIGADIER GENERAL, U.S. ARMY RETIRED

P. O. Box 1086
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIF.
May 20, 1954.

Mr. W.E.B. Du Bois,
C/o The National Guardian,
17 Murray Street, New York.
Dear Mr. Du Bois:

Although I have resolved to stand aside in national politics for the present, finding no honest program on which to stand, I cannot permit your article in the May 17th edition of the Guardian to go unchallenged. I agree with your premises. I disagree with your final conclusion: "Can we not compel Ohio and Illinois to list Progressive Party Candidates on the ballot?". The two are completely unrelated. I see little useful purpose in having the Progressive Party on the ballot.

As one interested individual I saw, in 1948, the birth of the Progressive Party by remote control, for I had already been briefed by one of its most active members that the convention was already cut and dried. I noted the steam-roller tactics at Philadelphia, on a par with the "Dixiecrat" convention which I had just attended, and the intellectually-dishonest platform based on the asinine concept of "progressive capitalism". Thereafter I tried in all honesty to find some basis for affiliation with the party, for being a natural crusader, I was in search of some organization within which I might express myself. But no such basis ever materialized. I observed the growing control over the organization by an inner bureaucracy, which openly displayed its power in the "smoke filled room" in Chicago in 1952. I noted the cynicism of the leadership in compromising on the anemic, foolish economic concepts of A.D.A.ism, still wrestling with the idea of making capitalism work. This could not have resulted from ignorance of the obvious truth that capitalism, as a technique for distribution, was rotten to the root, and was the fundamental cause of our equally rotten domestic and foreign policies, and must therefore have resulted from a planned program of deceit perpetrated upon the American people. I discussed this issue with Mr. Vincent Hallinan here in California in 1952, and he agreed with me but insisted that he was bound by the decisions of the bureaucracy. I have read the Guardian, and have followed the "party line" and find nothing but crepe-enshrouded negativity - no living program of positive action within our own democratic institutions, for which a patriotic citizen could campaign wholeheartedly. I continue to receive literature from the local offices, and although I have respect for the rank and file, mistrust the bureaucracy and avoid becoming involved.

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As you may know, back in 1944 I campaigned for Norman Thomas, but after careful observation concluded that he was a colossal failure who had betrayed his own followers. I take the same stand toward the Progressive Party for its lack of moral courage and its political dishonesty in concealing economic facts from the people and failing to present a constructive, dynamic program. It had a marvellous opportunity to seize the initiative and lead in a new grass roots liberalism founded on economic fact, but through its willingness to compromise, it has lost its opportunity, and, like Norman Thomas, becomes a dismal failure at the hour of greatest need.

So I say of the Progressive Party, "Would that thou were hot or cold, but being neither nor cold, I speak thee out!". Your appeal would have validity if ever there were a regeneration within the party, with the intelligence, the moral courage, and the dynamics to do the tremendous job which must be done. That regeneration would truly be a miracle.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Herbert C. Holdridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Herbert" and the last name "Holdridge" being more prominent than the middle initial "C.". The signature is written over the typed name.

Herbert C. Holdridge